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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAQ RELATIONS](#)
SUBJECT: GOK CONGRATULATES IRAQIS ON SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL
ELECTIONS

REF: A. STATE 225860

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 5166
[1](#)C. KUWAIT 5165

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Matthew H. Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) The Council of Ministers issued a statement December 18 congratulating the "brotherly Iraqi people" for the success of the December 15 national elections. In the statement, the Cabinet lauded the active participation of diverse Iraqi groups and sects, and expressed hope the elections would contribute to the security and stability of Iraq and strengthen Kuwait-Iraq relations. The Cabinet's statement echoed comments made by top GOK officials since the December 15 Iraqi elections. Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah sent a cable to Iraqi Prime Minister Dr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari on December 16 praising the successful elections. Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Salem Al-Sabah also lauded the recent elections, which he called a "turning point" not only for Iraq, but for the entire region.

[1](#)2. (C) Speaking about the elections to former President Bush at a dinner the evening of December 17, the Prime Minister said he wanted to be optimistic about prospects in Iraq, and the high turnout in a largely peaceful election had been heartening. However, he felt at heart that the real problem in Iraq was not whether elections could be held, but rather the depth of internal strife. It was not just a matter of Sunni vs. Shi'a, or Arab vs. Kurd. Within the various sectarian and ethnic divisions there were more divisions and more potential for conflict. Kuwait would continue to help, Shaykh Sabah said, repeating a promise he said he had given to the President during their recent phone conversation.

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